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U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Patrick L. Meehan  
Direct Dial: (215) 861-8500  
Fax: (215) 861-8509

615 Chestnut Street  
Suite 1250  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-4476  
(215) 861-8200

June 2, 2003

Ms. Sandy Rios, President  
Ms. Janet M. LaRue, Chief Counsel  
Concerned Women for America  
1015 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Suite 1100  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Rios and Ms. LaRue:

I received your letter dated April 30, 2003, inquiring about the status of obscenity cases filed by this office and the status of investigations into complaints about obscene material available on the Internet that have been filed on Morality In Media's web site, [www.obscenitycrimes.org](http://www.obscenitycrimes.org). The investigation and prosecution of child exploitation and obscenity is a priority in the Department of Justice. In his June 6, 2002, speech to the Federal Prosecutor's Symposium on Obscenity, Attorney General John Ashcroft stated that "[t]he Department of Justice is unequivocally committed to the task of prosecuting obscenity." Accordingly, we continue to work with state and federal law enforcement agencies, as well as with prosecutors in the Department of Justice's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, to aggressively investigate and prosecute those individuals and companies who manufacture and distribute obscene materials.

I am sure you understand that we are not able to comment on pending investigations into the distribution of obscene material into the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. We can report, however, that from January 2001 through May 14, 2003, this office has opened 38 investigations into child sexual exploitation and filed 12 indictments. Unfortunately, most, if not all, of the obscenity complaints received by this office are not actually prosecutable because of the difficulty associated with locating the actual individuals or companies that create and distribute the objectionable material. The trail to finding those individuals sometimes ends outside of our country's borders and out of our proecutorial reach or, even more frequently, to a dead end. Other reasons that obscenity complaints may not be prosecutable are that venue may not lie in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, or the objectionable material giving rise to a complaint may not be obscene under the Supreme Court's obscenity standard set forth in *Miller v. California* 413 U.S. 15 (1973).

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Ms. Sandy Rios  
Ms. Janet M. LaRue

Thank you so much for your inquiry about the status of our obscenity prosecutions. In addition to our efforts to investigate and prosecute obscenity cases, we continue to aggressively prosecute those individuals who exploit children. Be assured that we take very seriously all the complaints we have received and will continue to make it a priority to investigate and prosecute these individuals and entities that violate federal law.

Sincerely,



Patrick L. Meehan  
United States Attorney  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania

PLM/skm  
w/enclosure